

## Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /094 W

----- 014557

R 201110Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6260

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMCONSUL TANGIER

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 4021

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFO

PBOR, MO, SS, SP

SUBJECT: SAHARA DEVELOPMENTS

REF: RABAT 3855

1. SUMMARY: MOROCCANS EXPRESSING GROWING CONCERN OVER ALLEGED SPANISH ATTEMPTS TO ORGANIZE SAHARAN POLITICAL ELEMENTS. MILITARY ACTIVITY LOW, ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SOME SPECULATION THAT "THIRD FORCE" MAY BE INSTIGATING PROVOCATIONS AGAINST BOTH MOROCCAN AND SPANISH FORCES. A FUZZY ICJ OPINION, SEEN AS POSSIBILITY BY ALGERIANS AND OTHERS, WOULD ADD TO PRESSURES ON GOM TO ACT ON ITS OWN TO TRY TO ASSURE SUCCESS FOR SAHARA CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY

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2. SPANISH-F POLISARIO ZCOLLUSION?" MOROCCAN PRESS HAS BEGUN

TO REACT STRONGLY TO REPORTS THAT SPANISH MAY BE LEGITIMIZING ALGERIAN BACKED F POLISARIO IN THE SAHARA. REACTION HAS BEEN PEGGED INTER ALIA TO AN AFP REPORT THAT SPANISH HAVE NAMED MOHAMMED BEN ABDULLAH THAMI, A SAHARAN WITH ALLEGED F POLISARIO TIES, TO A HIGH POSITION IN THE SAHARAN ADMINISTRATION. PRESS HAS ALSO PLAYED UP RELEASE OF FOUR DETAINED F POLISARIO MEMBERS AND REPORTS THAT SPANISH ARE INITIATING CONTACTS WITH F POLISARIO ELEMENTS. OPPOSITION L'OPINION AUGUST 16 CALLED THESE DEVELOPMENTS MATTERS OF "UNPARALLELED GRAVITY," AND SEMI-OFFICIAL MAROC-SOIR( :9;34-&3 AUGUST 15 WAS HEADLINED "SPANISH-F POLISARIO COLLUSION." L'OPINION AUGUST 18 RIDICULED A REPORTED "CLASH" BETWEEN F POLISARIO AND PUNS SUPPORTERS IN AL AYUN AS "CALCULATED" AND "MASQUERADE," COMING AT TIME WHEN MADRID "MOVING IN CONCILIATORY DIRECTION" TOWARDS F POLISARIO. THIS APPEARED SIDE BY SIDE WITH ARTICLE REPORTING 1974 PROFIT OF ABOUT \$16 MILLION BY BOUCRAA SPANISH PHOSPHATE COMPANY.

3. LATEST INSTALLMENT CAME AUGUST 19 IN SEMI-OFFICIAL LE MATIN REPORT OF PRESS CONFERENCE HELD BY PUNS DEFECTOR KHALI HENNA OULD ER-RACHID (RABAT 2395), WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A SAHARA-EXPLAINING MISSION TO LATIN AMERICA. HE EXPRESSED SURPRISE TO LEARN UPON HIS RETURN OF SPAIN'S LATEST "MANEUVERS" IN SAHARA DESIGNED TO PERPETUATE OCCUPATION. HE SAID THAT APPOINTMENT OF THAMI, WHO HE IDENTIFIED AS DEPUTY TO GOVERNOR-GENERAL, AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF PUNS (COMMENT: PRESUMABLY REPLACING RACHID) WAS DONE WITHOUT CONSENT OF HIS COLLEAGUES IN PUNS. HE WENT ON TO EJECT, IN NAME OF PUNS, ANY POSSIBILITY OF A PUNS-F POLISARIO UNIFICATION AND WARNED SPAIN OF DIRE IONSEQUENCES OF ITS "UNILATERAL" ACTIONS.

4. MILITARY ACTIVITY: THERE HAS BEEN A LULL IN ACTIVITY FOLLOWING MOROCCAN-INITIATED INCIDENT WHICH ABORTED SPANISH TURNOVER OF MOROCCAN PRISONERS (RABAT 3766), WHO REMAIN IN SPANISH HANDS. HOWEVER, MOROCCANS HAVE COMPLAINED TO THE SPANISH ABOUT AN AUGUST 9 ATTACK O A MOROCCAN OUTPOST (DAO RABAT 151430Z AUG 75), AND SPANISH, PROFESSING INNOCENCE, HAVE SPECULATED TO US ON POSSIBILITY OF EXISTENCE OF A "THIRD FORCE" WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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RESPONSIBLE (RABAT 4011). (COMMENT: WHILE SELF-SERVING, SUCH SPANISH SPECULATION EFLECTS APPARENT DESIRE TO KEEP TENSIONS UNDER CONTROL).

5. ICJ: AN ALGERIAN EMBASSY SOURCE HERE HAS COMMENTED TO US ON POSSIBILITY THAT THE ICJ ADVISORY OPINION MIGHT NOT EMERGE AS CLEARLY AS MOROCCANS HOPE. WE NOTE THAT TUNISIANS AS WELL

APPARENTLY PERCEIVE THIS POSSIBILITY, FOLLOWING RECENT BOURGUIBA-BOUMEDIENE MEETING (RABAT 3949). A LOCAL OPPOSITION LEADER HAS ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER SUCH A DEVELOPMENT. AFOREMENTIONED ALGERIAN SOURCE IN ADDITION IMPLIED THAT SPAIN AND ALGERIA ARE NOW PURSUING BASIC POLICY OF HOLDING FAST WHILE AWAITING COURT OPINION.

6. COMMENT: AN ICJ OPINION CLEARLY FAVORING MOROCCO WOULD, OF COURSE, PERMIT FACE-SAVING FOR ALL CONCERNED, INCLUDING SELF-DETERMINATION ADVOCATES. LESS CLEAR OPINION, HOWEVER, COULD INCREASE PRESSURES ON GOM TO ACT ON ITS OWN TO TRY TO ASSURE POSITIVE SAHARA OUTCOME. KING'S RECOGNITION OF RISKS OF MILITARY ACTION WILL BE A RESTRAINING FACTOR, BUT ADDING TO KING'S PROBLEMS, ON OTHER HAND, IS CURRENT PRIVATE BUT HEAVY CRITICISM FROM OPPOSITION THAT HE WAS "TAKEN" BY ALGERIANS DURING BOUTEFLIKA'S VISIT WITH DETRACTORS POINTING TO FAILURE OF ALGERIANS TO FOLLOW THROUGH POSITIVELY ON JULY 4 JOINT COMMUNIQUE.  
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